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AUTHOR Theall, Donald F.
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ABSTRACT

This study in human communications ranges widely over scholarly work by Barthes, Bateson, Dewey, Richards, Peckham, Burke, and especially McLuhan, as well as art works by Warhol, Joyce, and various vodeo tape and film makers. In surveying the developments in art and advertising, the author finds that the arts (1) are now a kind of laboratory for an experimental world (McLuhan's conception), (2) are engaged in a process of disturbing the existing order (Peckham), (3) are thus future directed, and (4) are, as sources of aesthetic theory, powerful guideposts for communication theorists and scholars (Burke). Thus a study of the world's arts, examined systematically as communication, will yield a recognition that the "futuristic symbolic language of the arts provides a proper . . . tool of comparison with the general communication system of the here and now." (CH)

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The Role of Aesthetic Theory in (Mass) Communications Theory

by Donald F. Theall
McGill University

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If the usual description of the evolution of Marx as a philosopher is to suggest that he turned Hegel upside down, thus correcting the perspectives of Hegelian philosophy, the current paper is a similar attempt to turn Marshall McLuhan upside down and in the process to redeem his more important insights for communication theory. The first and most important of those insights, even if it is never articulated with full clearness, is that the primary means of approaching the contemporary study of both human communication and mass communication is through the traditionally developed body of theory in aesthetics. McLuhan's effective blitzkreig-like surprise on the fraternity of communications study on one hand and the Madison Avenue business world on the other, came chiefly from his developing insights concerning the relevance of a vast body of knowledge to areas of interest where such material was previously unfamiliar.

The second of McLuhan's insights was his recognition that the world of communication studies dealt with a vast range and level of symbols, which he, however, tended to lump together under the term "media" in his seminal work, Understanding Media. Consequently, he equated the technical significance of the film camera, the phenomenon of technological reproducibility and such expressive devices as fashion, housing and body language. To turn McLuhan upside down, it is necessary to eliminate

CS 500 270

his classificatory system, while accepting the wide range of significant symbolic material to which he calls our attention. Then it also becomes possible to sort out the various differences of levels between what Walter Benjamin would have called the effect of the means of technological reproducibility on the arts and the language of forms which the potentialities of a film or TV camera make available to us.

Much of the wealth of McLuhan's insights is lost because he quite intentionally attempted to prevent his readers from tending to "scientize" his approach. If at a certain level he develops a technological determinism by seeming to adopt an over-simplified use of a cybernetic model, he is always frustrating the exegete who wishes to pin him down in this manner by his fundamentally poetic approach - the use of aphorisms, wit, ambiguity and paradox. Historically, it must be remembered that he began his interest in this area around the same time that Reusch and Bateson were attempting to adapt Wiener and Shannon and Weaver's models to psychiatry and social psychology and Deutsch was trying the same in the area of the social sciences, especially political science. While McLuhan sensed the importance of the new concepts of information, feedback, sender, receiver, message, code and convention, he also sensed that they had outside of their immediate technical area a rich and suggestive series of relations to the humanities and the arts. His technique of poeticizing was in one way an evasion of commitment, but in another way, an attempt to force his readers to re-think the more humanistic implications of the particular language of the new communications world.

His problem is not unique, for Bateson throughout his own development appears to have shared the same problem, which he begins to work out in some of the later

essays in Steps to an Ecology of Mind. In his essay on "Style, Grace and Information in Primitive Art", Bateson remarks:

> . . . if art, as suggested above, has a positive function in maintaining what I called "wisdom", i.e., in correcting a too purposive view of life and making the view more systemic, then the question to be asked of the given work of art becomes: What sorts of corrections in the direction of wisdom could be achieved by creating or viewing this work of art? (Steps to an Ecology of Mind, p. 147)

Bateson's whole direction really forces us to ask the additional question, which is McLuhan's as well, as to whether or not the function of art is to provide a ground for expressive play which frees the person to explore newly evolving communicative symbols and communicative situations.

Before advancing the argument further, let us turn to the actual art scene of the Twentieth Century, which has frequently been superficially accused of lacking a genuine interest in communicating. In fact, since the beginning of the century, there have been charges that art has become esoteric, elite, overly elaborate and generally incomprehensible. This has occurred simultaneously in a period in which our own self-consciousness about the processes of communication has greatly increased, partly owing to new technological resources within the arts and where layman as well as scholar or scientific investigator have all been fascinated by the problem of communication. At least one defence on the part of artist has been the traditional defence that art is not interested in communication, but expressivity and that the problem of the failure in communication is a problem in the audience, not in the artist. Yet most thoughtful analysts have tended to reject this apparent dichotomy and, like John Dewey in Art as Experience, to stress the importance of art to communication, even if it is a mode of expressivity:

> In the end works of art are the only media of complete and unhindered communication between more and more than can occur in a world full of gulfs and walls that limit the community of experience. (Art as Expression, p. 105)

Since Dewey wrote in the early 30's, though the dialogue has been infinitely more complicated with respect to the breakdown of what is discussed as art nowadays, the act of looking back on Buck Rogers and Flash Gordon, re-examining Buster Keaton, even opening up the comic strips, novels and films of Tarzan, has created a cult who follow their interest with the same passion for detail, for comprehensiveness and even for collecting that has characterized what previously has been called art. Moreover, generations of critical analysts have developed who use the popular arts (so-called) as a way of challenging the central cultural role of art itself. The artists appear to have responded by converting the very objects of popular art into their own artistic forms, as the work of people like Warhol whose Campbell Soup Can created a dialectic between advertising-marketing and the visual arts. Campbell's Soup then borrowed its "can" back from Warhol, converting it into a symbol of decorative commercialistic play. Yet the intent of Pop Art, movements such as Minimal Art and Conceptual Art developed. These movements also become attempts to explore the expressive systems of the visual arts and to experiment with the elements and units, the relations and combinations which will potentially release new modes of expression.

Another reason why the notoriety Marshall McLuhan had among the public as a communication theorist is of considerable interest, is that his work related mass communication and popular art to the avant-garde and traditionalist arts as well as the world of criticism within which they existed. McLuhan used a series of poetic-like probes to explore the potentialities for change occurring in the world around him. Like the good North American analyst, he became seduced by a pre-

occupation with technology, but his fundamental interest continued to be how the confrontation of the new technology and the older modes of artistic expression were (to recall Ezra Pound's slogan) producing vast new possibilities for "making it new."

These examples return us to one very important way of looking at the arts as a form of play, usually erotic play, which permits the exploration of new developments and potentialities in the type of social reality which we are in the process of constructing.

What has this, however, to do with communications theory? Certainly, first of all, it is more than idly interesting to note that many of the concepts of communications theory are by no means new in the discussion of art or aesthetic theory. If, for example, a system of symbols is seen as involving some kind of code, early rhetorical theory as represented by such examples as Puttenham's Arte of English Poesie (1598) discussed figurative language as a kind of transgression of speech, a deviation within a code, a surprise of expectancy to place it in more contemporary terminology. Also a dramatistic theory of literature is found in Aristotle's Poetics where the dramatic becomes the quintessential form from which the narrative derives as a secondary and lesser possibility. The contemporary interest in dramatistic theories of social structure rising out of George Herbert Mead and Kenneth Burke again have deep roots in the discussion of the arts. Historically, there always has been a reciprocity between the so-called higher arts and popular or folk art, with certain kinds of art forms deriving most of their power from the way in which they related to the more popular everyday world. Mikhail Bakhtin's study of Rabelais and his World clearly shows how the

market-place, the carnival spirit and low comedy contributed to the making of Gargantua and Pantagruel as a celebration of the new humanism, recognizing the humanity of man's lower parts and earthiness as intrinsically intertwined with his intellectuality, though deriving from the arts of the "mass" rather than the "elite".

From this point, let us weave together a fabric from the world of art and aesthetics and the world of communications theory. The relevance of information theory concepts to the musical arts has been illustrated by Leonard Meyer; to the visual arts by Gombrich, and to the verbal arts by Jakobson and other stylistic analysts. In the process, some metamorphosis of the terminology may necessarily occur, since we are speaking artistically and metaphorically, though perhaps not necessarily unscientifically.

On other occasions, I have used Joyce's Finnegan's Wake, because of the author's extreme sensitivity to problems of communication. His hero, as has been observed, is called "Here Comes Everybody" and is described as "a receptoretentive", a "patternmind" with a "paradigmatic ear". Joyce, like Bateson, centers the communication process in the person and in the person's ability to retain and process patterns and link them to paradigms. Consequently, throughout the Wake there runs a high sensitivity for body language as the way in which man is himself an intrapersonal communications system. The externalization and reinternalization of this system creates the web of the communicative world in which man lives.

Moving to the level of interpersonal interchange, the artistic world has tended to view human interaction as dynamic and to discuss its occurrence under the general category of drama. This fact has been an intrinsic part of the Western

aesthetic tradition since Aristotle's Poetics, where the most fundamental method of "making" was to be found in the skill of the dramatist and in his ability to construct good fictions (imitations of actions or plots). The notion of imitation carried with it a suggestion of the construction of a reflection or condensation of the social reality, or perhaps more accurately the construction of a model of some area of social reality with, at least, the potentiality of a possible future. In discussing the activity of doing this, the term "play" has been introduced not only with reference to the drama as a kind of playing, but to all kinds of art as kinds of symbolic play of the mind-body with its environment - what Joyce described as man's "feelful-thinkamalinks".

It is almost banal to draw attention to the parallel of this terminology with the terminology that has emerged in the various descriptions of human encounter. Furthermore, in some of its analyses, as in Pope's Rape of the Lock or modern conceptual art, there is a game-playing ingredient introduced, as in examinations of "strategic interaction". The most conscious linking of the artistic basis of such material with the analysis of communication and social situations occurs in the work of Kenneth Burke, which has recently had an extensive influence in anthropological areas leading to such interesting studies as Peacock's Rites of Modernization a book which concerns itself with the social function of lukdruk drama in Javanese culture.

It is interesting that anthropologists have come to find the Burkean pentad more and more useful and to see greater and greater adaptability to his dramatistic view of symbolic action involving the pentad: act, scene, agent, agency and purpose. Hugh Duncan suggests that these might be expanded by including attitude

as an ambiguous term for incipient action following George Herbert Mead and I.A. Richards. In fact, in terms of considering the problem of humanizing the information sciences, Duncan observes:

> And whatever we say about the 'dehumanizing' effects of the machine, we must admit that it is a "characteristically human invention, conceived by the perfecting of some human aptitudes and the elimination of others . . . . If we can learn to think of mechanical models, not as downright anti-dramatistic, but as fragments of the dramatistic, we will take into account their human use. (Symbols and Social Theory)

The problem with Burkean analysis has not been its affinity with the arts, but the fact that it has confined its basic modes to certain artistic genre and thus created a problem rather similar to McLuhan's desire to hypostatize media. If the function of art is to explore, open up, create wisdom by reducing purposive and increasing systemic behaviour, then the choice of comedy and tragedy with their basic patterns as the only modes of dramatistic activity acts at cross-purposes to the purpose of art or the richness of uncommunicative phenomenon in society. But Duncan's initial argument is sound - that the dramatistic (artistically derived) model includes the mechanical model but comits its limits and illuminates other areas might otherwise be eliminated from analysis. At least within such a process of viewing the forms of social action, the factors of context and content themselves become susceptible of formalistic analysis. Duncan argues, in fact, that Burke teaches us "how to think about acting in, not thinking about, the world." (Symbol and Social Theory, p. 260)

But the use of artistically derived terminology in a crucially analytical sense is not restricted to Bateson or Burke and his followers. Developing the theory of the double-bind and the resulting paradoxes that may develop

between communication and metacommunication, Watzlawick and others in the Pragmatics of Human Communications select a dramatic script for analyzing this phenomenon, Albee's Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? This whole question of the paradoxical is much more deeply rooted in the artistic sphere. McLuhan's paradoxical wit comes straight out of a world of Renaissance drama (his earliest area of academic specialization), and Renaissance thought. Donne's study of suicide, the Biathanatos, amply illustrates this, since it is composed by a complex use of the strategies of paradox. In fact, as a form, the paradoxical encomium popular from Augustan Rome to the Renaissance was a way of investigating this area of the double-bind many centuries prior to the current theoretical analysis of logical paradox or schizophrenic as consulting from problems arising as a result of different levels of abstraction. It is possible that the changing patterns of madness as investigated by Foucault in his study on Reason and Madness is in itself a superb illustration that a shifting context of communication creates inabilities to communicate and that artistic documents illustrate these shifts with a peculiarly sensitive index?

Presumably the degree of intermeshing between artistic concepts and concepts in communications theory might easily be multiplied by widening the range of analysis, but our interest is in the fact that any theory of mass communication must of necessity work through individuals and, therefore, be an extension of the way we speak about the interpersonal communications encounter. Whether or not a man's senses have been educated in the ways that Plato or Huxley have at times suggested, they are still the major way in which

he receives and processes information from the environment around him. This means, as Schiller and Read and Marcuse have all insisted, as well as many others, that the function of communication and the function of the arts is erotic and is intimately involved with the total erotic sensuality of the human person. The dramatistic paradigm is not an abstraction from the senses, though sensuous experience itself can be and usually is an abstraction. Drama works both as an art form and as a paradigm for human encounter primarily because it is both sensuous and yet abstract enough to isolate and identify and process. Therefore, Burke's view that we are analyzing society dramatistically and Marcuse's analysis of the function of the arts in Eros and Civilization or the Essay on Liberation are quite reconcilable. It is at this point that it is possible to comprehend how the way of speaking of the interpersonal encounter as an art of living and the work of art as a personal encounter can both be valid statements.

Metaphors, such as the art of living which have become popularized through concepts like life style, or counter-cultures, take on a new relevance once the close analogy between the unplanned interpersonal interaction and the recreated or staged interaction of drama, dance of mime comes to be an issue. This is not meant to naively suggest that the good man learns good things from art, since it has been clearly shown that we can learn a multiplicity of things from the same artistic experience ranging from heroism and courage to sadism and corruption. (Steiner reminds us of the concentration camp commandants who loved Mozart and Goethe.) It is means to suggest that art in its own way is an experimental learning situation which works down

into society through a series of levels. As an experimental learning situation, it may have a great deal to do with the way that we come to master the symbols by which we communicate.

When William Stephenson suggested the importance of the play theory to an understanding of the mass media, he opened the way to theoretically understanding the relation between the arts and the mass media, on one hand, and the way that the mass media like the arts are really extensions of personal encounter, on the other. Admittedly, there are two distinct problems involved here. One, that outlined by Walter Benjamin and mentioned earlier, which clearly indicates the ways in which the technological reproducibility or art (or art-like material) changes all of the social relationships concerning art and popular culture. At this level, much of what McLuhan suggests is correct, if distorted, and a rather extensive task of correction and retrieval is still required if the matter is to be adequately analyzed. This involves the kind of question which is raised by the fact that the reproducibility of a work in some way diminishes the cult of aura which surrounded the single unique artifact or presentation, extending the problem that print traditionally had into all of the other areas of media experience. The other problem is the distinctiveness between the kinds of objects or events that we have described as works of art and those which we have not. Here there is a genuine area of ambivalence.

The questions that this kind of ambivalence raise are not purely associated with semantics, however, for they colour the very way in which we structure any quantitative examination of the role of advertising or the role of

art which might decide to undertake. In fact, in a certain borderline world, art itself becomes a kind of advertising when reproductions of accepted masterpieces become means of legitimating the advertising pitches involved in the sales of certain kinds of products. But such concerns are peripheral to a much more central set of concerns: Is there a real distinction between a commercial spot using the techniques of Last Year at Marienbad or Juliet of the Spirits, and the works themselves; what are the real distinctions between the first Apollo shot to the moon, 2001 and Star Trek?

The technique of McLuhan's first book, The Mechanical Bride, of Reuel Denney in The Astonished Muse and of Tom Wolfe's Kandy-Kolored Tangerine-Flake Streamlined Baby (1965) was to apply the strategies of new criticism (explication du texte) to the objects of mass culture whether they be ads, comic strips, popular films, novels like Gentlemen Prefer Blondes or what you will. These revealed, as McLuhan's Mechanical Bride demonstrated, that there are a vast network of implied assumptions woven into most of the everyday objects and everyday symbolic events of our present culture and that strictly literary analysis (or hermeneutics) illustrate this fact. Naturally, at that time, such results would have been challenged as to their scientific validity, but a generation of continental structuralists have attempted to translate the McLuhan-Denney techniques into more logically valid methodologies resulting in works such as Roland Barthes' study of La Mode. But even allowing for the greater rigor of Barthes' approach, there are many similarities to the hermeneutic approach.

What constitutes an artistic event may merge closely with a mass media event. Take the case that Lee Baxandall uses in Radical Perspectives in

the Arts of "the Grinnel Nine" as an example of a theatrical spectable: that is, the event where a group of naked college men and women appeared at a lecture given by a member of Playboy publicity team and invited him to join them in disrobing, leading to his reply that "I came here to talk, not to pose nude." The Grinnel Nine may have been in bad taste from some people's point of view, but it was hardly indecent (or in the strictest sense of the word, artistically indecorous) since it clearly provided a presentation of the individuality of the human person and simultaneously a critique of the artificalization and commercialization and degradation of that figure in Playboy. The complexity, if merely by differentia, that makes human nudes unique humans provided a way of indicating the over-simplification of the artifically posed touched-up Playgirls of the Month. Implicit in this is the exploratory nature of the artistic in relation to modes of communication as opposed to the less exploratory approach of the mass communications techniques themselves.

McLuhan sensed that the over-inundation of the sensibility (information and sensory pollution) occurring from new mass media would have a counter-effect that he optimistically hoped would lead to some kind of social improvement and social liberation. His insight that the over-inundation would have a counter-effect was right, partly because it was a prophecy after the event had already occurred in Dadaism, surrealism, expressionism and the writings of authors such as Joyce, the paintings of Klee and the music of Schoenberg and Stockhausen. But what he failed to see is the dialectical relation that art would always be in with relation to the more generally

available modes of symbolic communication.

Pop art, among the visual arts, provides a rather simple set of examples. Pop artists took the material of popular culture and through isolating an object and transforming its context changed its content and its significance. Warhol's repeated image of Jackie Kennedy became a put-on on the mass communications world, although through this very act, he elevated people's consciousness about the use of imagery. What the pop art movement did was to elevate to a level of consciousness some of the implications implicit in the symbols and objects of everyday life which worked as a kind of linguistic transformation completely changing the way in which the person who viewed the pop art object would again look at the original. There is a close parallel between this phenomenon in the visual arts and the activity that we outlined above in the Grinnel Nine situation even though its importance for communication theory and more general social theory has, however, tended to be understressed, partly because of the genuine power involved in the particular rhetorical strategy.

In a very comic way, the Grinnel Nine incident provides a comic perspective on the society which accepts the mass cult images of Playboy without relating them to broader human and erotic issues. As such, it is a very simple type of the dialectical complexity of criticism involved in the relation of art to the mass cultural phenomena of a given period. Admittedly, the moment of encounter is a relatively minor art event, but the complexity of issues that it raises does create a re-examination of a whole series of phenomena in the mass cultural world from the strip tease and the music

hall through the nude models in male magazines to the standard underwear and bathing suit advertising.

The questions of context, content and comparison become central to such an event and its particular status as a minor artistic event which both presses and communicates. In fact, mass cultural activity follows artistic activity in trying from early on to attempt to create contexts which cut across media of transmission and presentation. Even in children's books like the Oz series, Frank Baum was converting his material into drama and film and even comic strips by 1914. More generally, during the '20s and after, the comic strips fed the serials of the film world, and the serials of the radio world created their own comic magazines. Beyond that, people talked about the heroes and the people who played the heroes developing the kind of total context which made of each mass media event not just what was happening on the screen or on the air, but the total environment that it managed to generate. This continues to exist, for a Batman television series not only causes a revival of the Batman comic strip of the past and of the Batman serial films, but also creates a Batman culture with Batman fashions and fan discussion of Batman and the various actors who realize him as an image.

This is important because to a certain extent it suggests how strongly the media like the arts exist in talk about what is going on. Rock produced the phenomena of the Rolling Stone; science fiction has always had its fan clubs; the film magazine was an early offshoot of the film industry. Most techniques geared at the analysis of an object do not readily turn up the significance of the context in which the object (or event) exists.

The fact that the arts exist in such a social world of talk and interpersonal encounter suggest that they are never regarded or at least seldom regarded with a naive purity. At some of the more extreme ends of the artistic spectrum, this has been carefully calculated into the work by the artist much in the same way a public relations campaign might be built up for a product. Alexander Pope, for instance, attacked his own works under pseudonyms or deliberately provoked attacks on his work for later use within them. What is involved, though, is that the arts are a highly exploratory part of the social process and provide reasonably interesting ways of exploring some of the symbolic potentialities of communication.

Morse Peckham, in a rather exasperating volume called Man's Rage for Chaos: Biology, Behavior and the Arts, clearly indicates the extent to which the arts are a human activity for adaptation. While Peckham would certainly not fully agree, this theory could be extended, I suspect, to indicate that the arts in general are experimenting with new communicative potential. A simple example of this in literature might be Pope's development of what Joyce jestingly called the "zeroic couplet" - what many Pope critics have argued is a potentially negating and nihilistic device. Pope, extending his insights from skepticism and Pascal, explored a road towards a logic of negation considerably before Hegel developed the "demonodicy" of the Phenomenology. The "zeroic couplet" became a way of playing with how it feels to use the strategy of "negations", even if the individual developing it may have been regarded as a member of the landed gentry, for he was also a member of a minority group which was mildly persecuted and reasonably concerned for

its safety.

Much more current crises in the arts have evolved such phenomena as minimal art and conceptual art which began to re-examine the material and symbolic elements of the basis of art itself. Flavin's use of fluorescent lights explores an object, new light qualities, and new light and colour relationships, which may become a component in both a new personal language of expression for individuals and a new artistic language of expression about our particular world. Nothing perhaps more than the phenomenon of Expanded Cinema described by Gene Youngblood demonstrates how the arts are constantly exploring and experimenting with new expressive potentialities, even if this must be achieved through the transformation of technological materials into symbolic components. In fact, many of the examples with which Youngblood is concerned actually turn technology itself into a symbolic language, which is why writers like Youngblood are so attracted to McLuhan's thesis that technology is transforming man and itself into a new sensibility. Actually, this is just a special case of what all artistic activity is doing; that is, developing new symbolic languages for communicative purposes and in interaction with the spoken language providing the basis for a new evolving symbolic superstructure, though just as the existence of Youngblood's book or Cinema Culture or Take One suggests, the world of language about the changes is an intrinsic part of the whole process of change.

If this type of hypothesis proves to be correct, there are certain fundamental implications for the study of human communications. First of all, the arts assume a totally new importance as the type of laboratory or experimental world which McLuhan urged that they were. Evidence of the avant-garde

movement combined with evidence from history strongly suggest McLuhan's point on this matter is correct. Second, the arts as Peckham argues, provides a biological and socially adaptive function which is at least superficially directed towards a "rage for chaos", since they are engaged in a process of disturbing the existing order to explore new hypothetical states. These may appear to be more limited and less revolutionary, as in a Pope poem or a Dickens novel, or even a Walter Scott novel or a Rembrandt painting, but even each of these cases opens up new expressive possibilities which explore avenues of change in communicative potentialities. For example, Dickens discovers in his work, as Raymond Williams has pointed out, the fragmented character as a way of beginning to explore the nature of fragmentation and alienation in the contemporary (19th century) urban setting. His caricatures, therefore, are not failures, but ways of exploring new symbolic needs, and it is possible they translate themselves very rapidly into a much wider range of social discussion. Third, therefore, the arts are looking towards the future rather than towards the past. This, of course, implies that the arts are ultimately all future directed and that this is not a peculiarly new emphasis. Naturally, this does not deny that the lower ends of the spectrum may also not have their element of symbolic experimentation, "rage for chaos" and future orientation, but that the higher ends of the spectrum pursue this with a complexity, the lower with a reflected and selective segment of the complexity.

Fourth, by turning to theories of art, communication theorists will derive as the Burkeans have already shown, powerful analytical tools. It is true to argue that linguistics became liberated when it stopped, through

philology, being linked to literature, but the reason for its liberation was not that it rejected literature, but that it decided to work with the speech act itself and the individual human speech act, as Sapir and Chomsky have both maintained. From that perspective it is possible to return to the arts and see the peculiar richness of their creativity. The fact that Marcuse's Eros and Civilization is as much about communication as about art, both are involved in the civilizing function, is only allowing the Dewey tradition in which one major area of the study of communication was founded, to come full circle.

That art itself is conscious of this alliance, I have demonstrated elsewhere in analyzing a passage from Joyce in which he explicitly speaks about the communication process of his own book in terms of cybernetic-like concepts before cybernetics itself had formally evolved. His whole experiment with language, which fascinated McLuhan as well as many others, apparently is a way to explore the symbolic potentialities open in a world that has become ever more hyper-conscious about the act of communications itself, a world where the work of Birdwhistell or Goffmann cannot be divorced from the evolution of the television or the film camera. What is needed that goes beyond the limits of this paper is a thorough study of aesthetics in the light of communication theory which would inter-relate the study of human communication at the interpersonal level with the study of mass communications and the arts. Karl Deutsch, discussing quite a different area of interest in The Nerves of Government, wrote about The Outside World as Resource: The Concepts of Curiosity and Grace. His view that the concept of grace involves (1) the

insufficiency of all current as well as of all predictable routines for the preservation of autonomy; (2) the expectation that all limited problems of self-responsibility and self-government have answers, that the finding of those answers in time is possible, although it is improbable, and that it is apt to depend in part on processes beyond the control of an autonomous organization; (3) the assumption of a new attitude of readiness and receptivity toward crucial new experiences and new data . . . (which) "will nevertheless increase the probability of their being found and acted on in time to forestall self-destruction." (p. 238-9) Pope sometime earlier spoke about the art that is truly art being the art of the artist who can "snatch a grace beyond the reach of art."

But it is from this perspective of grace or of curiosity that we can begin to frame the interesting hypotheses about the everyday operation of our world of symbols and objects. This world of grace, which leads us back to Bateson and the fact that thinking should be systemically oriented as well as purposively oriented, leads us to recognize that the futuristic symbolic language of the arts provides a proper and appropriate tool of comparison with the general communication system of the here and now. If today there seems to be a revival of a frankly futuristic literature in science fiction and a relatively futuristic world of the visual, the auditory and the mobile in painting, music, radio and television, it may remind us that Sidney saw Utopia as a most intense form of poetry and that with the way that our own communications hyperconsciousness is leading to a consciousness for the need of constant modes of experimentation with future modes of symbolic expressiveness, we are regaining a true sense of the adaptive and evolutionary nature

of the life-giving force which is part of the open-ended system of art which creates its feeble reflections in mass media, of which it also stands as a constant criticism and challenge.

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